

IV Social relation: the mechanism

1. The inner (internal) mechanism

A. Outlook

As the “inner (internal) mechanism” of the social relation, we understand the interrelating (interrelated) mental acts, whose execution is constitutive for the coming (or bringing) about, and the course (sequence and order of events), of a social relation. These acts can be isolated in terms of theory, and observed as isolated, in the sense that they take place in the “interior (or inner world (dimension, space))”, that is in the “spirit(-intellect)” or in the “psyche (mind, soul)” of every individual subject, which – either way – has a (and takes) part in a social relation; that which we want to call the “outer (external) mechanism” of the social relation, cannot, on the other hand, be described if, concurrently, [[both]] the “inner (internal)” and “outer (external)” acts are not taken into consideration, in connection [[with one another]], in respect of all the – either way – participants in the social relation. The mental acts constantly interwoven with one another, which make up the inner (internal) relation of the social relation, are fundamentally two: namely, [[1]] the perception of the Other as subjectivity, together with all the implications and imponderabilities of this property, and [[2]], the putting oneself in (and or empathising with) the situation (or position) of the Other, i.e. both in his (the Other’s) “inner (internal)”, as well as in his (the Other’s) “outer (external)”, situation (or position). Since the analysis of both these mental acts, which, for their part, consist of a number of individual acts, occurs within the social-ontological framework and with social-ontological intent, thus, this analysis does not mean any indirect rehabilitation of that psychologism, which we wanted to avoid in regard to the description of

the spectrum of the social relation. The inner (internal) mechanism of the social relation by no means depends – in regard to its general form-related (i.e. formal) course, which social-ontologically alone is worth consideringⁱ –, on the personal psychological properties of the I (Ego) or of the Other (Alter); it (the said inner mechanism) is in all human subjects in its basic features, the same, and – what will prove to be decisive – it also does not vary in accordance with whether one stays in the friendly or inimical half of the spectrum of the social relation; the joyous and the melancholic, the extroverted and the introverted, the “good” and the “bad (evil)”, friends and foes, must make use of it (the said inner mechanism of the social relation) equally, irrespective of what refinement or coarsening it experiences or undergoes in every individual. Also, the unavoidable use of psychological concepts must not here lead [[us]] to psychologistic false steps. Because these concepts are used as generally (universally) applicable formalities (i.e. formal/form-related (not with regard to content) starting points, as pertaining to forms, or, form-related lines of thought), or as always present variables, which in accordance with the personal case, can be bound to entirely different content(s); these contents, which might concern the psychologists of the individual and, if need be, the historian or the sociologist, are not taken into account here. However, already the handling of the inner (internal) mechanism of the social relation on the part of actors is not in the least all along the line psychologically oriented. As we shall see later, the mental “system”, which the actors erect or set up, in order to become the master of the original and never conclusively (definitively) conquerable imponderability (incalculability) of the Other, spreads (stretches, extends) across several levels, in relation to which the subjectively meant meaning of alien/foreign act(ion)s (i.e. of the acts of others), just like the objectively meant meaning of these same alien act(ion)s (i.e. acts of others), comes into consideration.

It must not especially be explained that the “interior (or inner world (dimension, space))” as a synonym of the “mental (dimension or element)” merely constitutes a spatial metaphor, which is capable of a number of interpretations, depending on how one wants to think of, or imagine, the psycho-physical nexus; fortunately, this thorny question can remain to be seen, i.e. left open, in the social-ontological context. Likewise, it goes without saying that talk of the “inner (internal)” and “outer (external)” mechanism of the social relation should be comprehended as a simplifying abstraction, which appears to be suitable, convenient and expedient for reasons of (re)presentation and description. The formation, development, extension and completion of both mechanisms accompany each other genetically and structurally, although important conceptual distinctions, like e.g. that between social action and the social relation, ultimately rest (are based) on the contrast between inner (internal) and outer (external) processes (orders or sequences of events)¹. Finally, we shall point out a further objective interrelation between two conceptual abstractions, which, admittedly, seems to be far less self-evident, however, whose social-ontological relevance cannot be estimated highly enough. It is a matter of the manner in which the belonging together (togetherness or common bond) of the spectrum and of the mechanism of the social relation is to be thought about. We have already said that the mechanism of the social relation behaves indifferently (is indifferent) towards friendship and towards enmity, that it, therefore, is capable of supporting every shape and form and every crystallisation inside of the spectrum of the social relation, without functionally determined resistance. However, it is not a matter here merely of a mutual (reciprocal) indifference, which stands in the way of any possibility of the development (unfolding) of the social relation. Rather, a mutual determination (or dependency) and a deep organic intertwining

¹ See below Section 2Aa in this chapter.

(entanglement) are present, which must find expression in the logical unity (or coherence) of their social-ontological (re)presentation and description. Not only does the constantly remaining-the-same (unchanging, unvarying) composition or texture of the mechanism of the social relation constitute a necessary precondition (prerequisite) for the enormous speed of movements in the spectrum of this same relation, which would turn out to be essentially more inflexible if every time, along with the character of the relation, also that composition or texture, and consequently the constitution of man himself, had to change. Still deeper, perhaps, do the breadth and flexibility of the spectrum of the social relation influence the mechanism itself. The latter (mechanism) is formed and developed in fact in the necessary-for-life (i.e. vital, essential) striving or endeavouring of the social actor to adapt and adjust himself – through constant and flexible movement – to the constant and flexible movement of the rest of the (on each and every respective occasion, relevant) actors along the whole breadth of the spectrum of the social relation. As the development of all the possibilities of this spectrum presupposes the uniformity of the mechanism of the social relation, thus, for its part, the full activation of this mechanism presupposes that the social relation is dealt with not merely with regard to each and every respective actor standing across or opposite from an actor, but by bearing in mind all – apart from that – known possibilities of the development and unfolding of the social relation. The already existing background knowledge regarding the latter (social relation) constitutes the tacit starting point when it is a matter that one (an actor) will put oneself/himself in the position of (and or empathise with) the Other, and assess or appraise which place in the spectrum of the social relation the Other will occupy vis-à-vis the [[one's/the actor's own]] Ego – at any rate, the actions and reactions of the Other, without that background knowledge, can hardly be put into order and classified socially. Conversely: the relation of the Ego towards (vis-à-vis) the Other (alter) is not merely shaped and moulded on the basis of what the Ego

knows, or can know, about the Alter thanks to the mechanism of the taking on (over) and assumption of roles (role assumption (adoption)), but into the relation, all (things) (i.e. everything), – what(ever) the Ego in general knows about the possibilities of the development of the spectrum of the social relation, about the exchangeability of places in that (spectrum of the social relation) and about the character of the social relation –, flow(s) as a formative factor (i.e. factor of shaping and moulding). The socially mediated (re)presentation or notion of the spectrum of the social relation determines, in this respect, the inner (internal) mechanism of the same (social relation), and it is not at all essential to be familiar from one's own experience with all the places inside of the spectrum in order to jointly take them (the said places inside the spectrum of the social relation) into account (or in order to factor them in), in regard to the relation towards the Other. It is, in the course of this, irrelevant with how much detail and how concretely the ego imagines the spectrum – that can, naturally, vary enormously from (hu)man to (hu)man. However, everyone has at his disposal an – in practice – sufficient image (picture) of his polarity and continuity, and makes use (avails himself) of the mechanism of the social relation, by putting oneself in (and or empathising with) the position of the Other, with regard to exactly this image or picture.ⁱⁱ

For that reason, from a new point of view, the objective and methodological meaning of the fundamental thesis, which we formulated and explicated in the critical discussion of methodological individualism, becomes recognisable. The individual social relation takes place only before the background of the fact of society and of the social in its totality². If there were only two human beings in the world, then it would hardly cross their mind to call their relation towards (as between or with) each other a *social* relation. And in view of the unavoidable narrowness of the spectrum of their relation, which no social experience would

² See Ch. II, Section 2Cc, cf. 3B, above.

extend or expand, the mechanism of the social relation would be reduced to the animal-reflexive. Only in the diachrony and the synchrony of society does the spectrum of the social relation unfold and develop fully, and this fully developed spectrum flows then via the processes of socialisation and (via) the individually stamped social experience as (a) formative factor (i.e. factor of shaping and moulding) into individual social relations and into the form-related (i.e. formal) remaining-the-same (unchanging, unvarying) mechanism of the social relation. The fact of society is not of course, for its part, perceived as an undifferentiated whole, but as a plexus, network or mesh of relations, whose differentiation makes up exactly the spectrum of the social relation in its polarity and continuity. When the social subject forms an overall or a total judgement about society, and often uses it (the said overall or total judgement of society) as a guiding principle for its (the social subject's) action, thus, it does not lose sight of, or lose touch with, the rich-in-variants spectrum of the social relation, its peripeteias and imponderabilities or incalculabilities, but it identifies (equates) merely for some practical goal or purpose, "society" with one of the forms of the relation existing in it ("society"). It (The said social subject) does that (identifying/equating), again, as a rule, with a reservation, because it knows from social experience what could be in store for those who do this (identifying/equating) without a reservation (i.e. do this unconditionally), that is, by acting without the always new and always growing activity (actuation or operation) of the mechanism of the social relation being borne in mind in respect of all the possibilities of development of the spectrum of the same (social relation).

ENDNOTES –

NOTHING TO DO WITH P.K.. DON'T FORGET, THE TRANSLATOR WAS BORN MORE THAN ONE THOUSAND YEARS AGO AND HAS GONE INSANE. DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME READING HIM AND HIS STUPID NOTES (THOUGHTS, COGITATIONS, RUMINATIONS).

ⁱ I.e. social ontology only takes into consideration the inner mechanism of the social relation's formal (not content-related, psychological) course.

ⁱⁱ If one does not have some sort of idea what e.g. a "friend's" or "foe's" or "indifferent person's" position is in regard to one's own positioning, then one has not an – obviously to many different and varying degrees – a friend or foe or someone indifferent before him, as the case may be (on a case-by-case basis, of course).